

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 10 are amended. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representatives by Examiner Choudhury in the April 26 telephone interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sakaguchi (U.S. Patent No. 6,594,636 B1) in view of Paul (US Patent Application No. US 20020169835A1). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, neither Sakaguchi nor Paul, individually or in combination, discloses or suggests at least creating an e-mail message to the recipient by the user, the recipient who does not have access to the workflow system, associating a process of the workflow system with the determined network address and sending the e-mail message having a link to the determined network address to the recipient, wherein the link provides the recipient with an access to the associated process of the workflow system, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claim 10.

Sakaguchi instead discloses a workflow management method for a system in which works are performed via a network interconnecting user interface and a combination of a mail system and a workflow management system. Specifically, as shown in Sakaguchi's Fig. 5, all of the users and recipients of the mail message have access to the workflow management system. In fact, the Office Action, at page 3, acknowledges that Sakaguchi does not disclose embedding a link within the e-mail. Thus, it must follow that Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest the contents of the link embedded in the e-mail. In other words, the claims recite that the link provides the recipient with an access to the associated process of the workflow system. The reason that Sakaguchi does not provide for such link is that, as discussed above,

all of the users and recipients in Sakaguchi's workflow management system have access to the system.

Paul merely discloses that a hyperlink can be embedded in an e-mail message. However, Paul does not disclose or suggest that the link provides the recipient with an access to the associated process of the workflow system. Therefore, neither Sakaguchi nor Paul, individually or in combination, discloses or suggests the features of the claims.

Sakaguchi does not disclose or suggest at least receiving a workflow-enabled email message that includes a link to a network address associated with a workflow process, wherein the network address is specific to the workflow process and to the email message, and by selecting the link, the workflow system provides the user access to the workflow process, as recited in independent claim 21. Specifically, Sakaguchi is directed toward creating a method to manage a centralized workflow system based upon an electronic mail system by extracting workflow information from email data that is stored within the archived central location. Sakaguchi assumes that all parties that have received or sent an email message are valid users of the workflow system, and therefore does not disclose or suggest the above-noted features of the claim. Independent claim 23 distinguishes over the applied art for similar reasons.

Therefore, independent claims 1, 10, 21 and 23 define patentable subject matter. Claims 2-9, 11-20, 22 and 24-25 depend on the respective independent claims, and therefore also define patentable subject matter, as well as for the other features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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